

Human Resources Legislative Update

Ontario Amends Rules for Shutdown Zone Regarding School Closures and Limited Circumstances in Which They May Operate

Date: April 15, 2021

The Ontario government has amended the [Rules for Areas in Stage 1](#) to give effect to [its recent announcement](#) regarding the closure of public and private elementary and secondary schools, among other things.

As a general rule, [Ontario Regulation 278/21](#) amends the Shutdown Zone rules to require closure of all public and private schools within the meaning of the *Education Act* (this restriction does not apply to certain First Nations schools).

There are limited exceptions to this general rule. Schools may open:

- to the extent necessary to facilitate the operation of a childcare centre within the meaning of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*
- where approved by the Minister of Education, to facilitate the operation of an extended day program, as defined in the *Education Act*, for the provision of emergency childcare for the children of the prescribed individuals eligible for emergency childcare
- to allow staff of the school or private school to provide remote teaching, instruction or support to pupils, as long as directives and public health guidelines are followed, or
- to provide in-person instruction to pupils with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning and who wish to attend a school or private school for in-person instruction, as long as directives and public health guidelines are followed.

O. Reg. 278/21 also expands the list of those individuals eligible for emergency childcare.

These changes come into effect on April 15, 2021.